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[535] members of the groom's party sat down on chairs on the right wing of the *maq'ad*. The rest of the *maq'ad* was occupied mostly by women and children from the bride's village. The bride was soon hustled off behind the cabinets, and she did not reappear for about half an hour, at which time the ceremony began.

After some shifting around, the central section of the *maq'ad* was occupied by, among others, the best man (*shbūn*), the groom, the Mungif priest, and the elderly priest of the other village, who is now largely inactive except for special occasions.

The waiting people seemed to divide themselves into three groups. One was gathered around the bride, the second at the *maq'ad*, the third (rather formless) moved in and out from the porch and stood around talking in the part of the house near the entrance. Occasional shots and fire-crackers were heard from outside.

[535] The *dabkēh* was passed around from hand to hand several times, and perhaps six women did solo dances in the center of the *maq'ad*. A handkerchief in each hand, the woman either holds them aloft, twirling them, or waves them together as she dances. In most cases, there was little body motion, and the step simply carried the woman around in slow circles, but in one case—a woman who had to be persuaded to dance—some movement of the pelvis was apparent. Usually, the faces of the performers were rather expressionless, and the women, mostly young, but one or two middle-aged, seemed to be dancing merely as an expected part of the proceedings.

[533] While this was going on, there were repeated cries, especially by older women, to the group in general, of *ir-jay el-'arāis wel-'awwar*, followed by a shrill and very rapid "lo-lo-lo-lo-lo," with hand held to mouth. A third type of cry arose repeatedly from groups of men. They would sing some praise of the bride and groom and end it with a long-held high note, hands raised high, one finger pointing upwards. This was done at the greeting outside the house.

The solo dances did not follow immediately upon one another, and the intervals were marked by little or no activity in the *maq'ad*, people either sitting quietly or talking with each other, some changing places, others coming in. One feature in general of social gatherings is sitting rather quietly in a circle—no pressure, apparently, to bubble if one does not feel like it. Small glasses of *'araq* and wine, with small candies and sugared almonds, were passed around at one point.

[574] Finally, a round wooden table was placed in the center of the *maq'ad*, and a white cloth was put over it. The two priests stood at one side together, with a lay assistant (a nephew of the bride although her contemporary in age). The bride, dressed in white with veil, was escorted to the table, her arm held by her *shbūnī* (maid of honor). Her eyes were downcast, her arms folded across her stomach, and she stood in this pose throughout the entire ceremony. The groom stood beside her, and the *shbūn* was to his right—bride and groom flanked by *shbūns* and

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[535] after about ten minutes, and about ten minutes more elapsed until the bride, still in bridal dress, and her party got into their car. They led the procession to Mazqūf.

In Mazqūf there was a large group observing the proceedings outside the groom's father's house. Upon arrival, the bride, standing on a chair in the door, slapped a piece of raw dough on the lintel above the door, molded it into a round bun shape, and made a cross on it with the heel of her hand. While still standing on the chair, she was provided with oranges which she threw at the people standing around. Then she walked inside. Two automobiles filled with relatives came with her from her village, and they included spouses of siblings who were strange to both villages. The bride, the groom, and his father stood in the *maq'ad* to receive congratulations.

Again, with the principals in the center, people sat themselves down in the *maq'ad*. *'Araq* and wine were offered around. A large crowd of children gathered at each door to watch—staring silently.

[535] The same dance performance as at the ceremony was carried out. However, the soloists included young men as well as women this time. After some solos, five persons, mostly of middle age, locked arms and danced a set of the *dabkē*, the principal folk dance of Lebanese; and during the evening it was done several times more.

The bride disappeared for a long period, during which two large tables were brought in and placed parallel to each other in the upper and lower parts of the *maq'ad*. They were set with plates and glasses and bottles of *'araq*. *Tabbouleh*, cold *kibbē*, beans and bread were served.

When the bride reappeared, after changing into an ordinary dress, she took her place at the main table. The groom's sisters were active all the time bringing in food and collecting dishes. A large number of persons sat, neither eating nor taking [853] active part—just watching. These included the children. At one point, a woman sitting near the cabinets opened the front of her dress and began nursing a small baby. Later, another woman did the same with one of her small ones, sitting in the same place.

[533] The activity at the head table was enlivened by songs in praise of the bridal couple sung either by men standing behind the chairs or by others sitting down. At the end of each, arms would be raised and the high musical note, mentioned before, sung in unison. One man after another seemed to pick up the solo part rather casually after the previous phrase was finished. Some were well-known and conventional. In others, there would be laughter or nods, as if the singer had made up a clever verse impromptu, or said something with an apt and original turn of phrase. These songs of praise (*mwaleyo*) were usually phrased in terms such as those which likened the bridal couple to the stars or the light of the sun. Many seemed to be known by heart by everyone, just as everyone seemed to know the dance steps.

The bride no longer wept, and for a long time, she sat next to her father-in-law, who sat in a corner, conversing quietly with him.

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The table in the upper part of the *mafʿal* was moved away first, and dancing continued as before in the space provided. In moments when there was no dancing, solo songs were sung by one or another sitting around the circle. A complete silence fell over the crowd while the *shāʿir* sang many verses in sonorous Classical Arabic of the tragic epic of Qays and Layla, whose plot, though set among Bedouin of the Umayyad period, bears striking resemblance to that of the story of Romeo and Juliet. During the recitation, familiar to all, the peoples' faces seemed thoughtful and reflective, and there was applause when the song was finished. Usually there was no applause after the dances during which everyone was clapping in time anyway.

The couple subsequently took up residence in the groom's own house. Neolocal residence is not uncommon at the present time, and it appears to be preferred by most young couples.

This account requires comment at a number of points.

1. In contrast to funerals, weddings are attended only by those who are invited. In this case the number of those invited by the groom was said to be limited because it was his second marriage, and because two large families happened to be in mourning, hence it was not fitting for their members to attend. Weddings are forbidden outright during the major part of Lent. There is a general sense of the incompatibility of happy and sad events or periods, and these rules and practices have the purpose of avoiding conflicts in emotions.

2. Peghiadi (1925, pp. 296–97) writes in some detail of what he calls a mock battle, of a verbal sort, which takes place in Maronite mountain villages when the groom's party approaches the bride's house. The incident reported above might not deserve to be called a verbal "mock battle" at all, but there was a definite sense of the groom's party being stopped for a time before it was allowed to approach and enter the house.

3. Writing of marriage practices in a Palestinian Muslim village, Granqvist (1935, p. 40) says that since they are losing a daughter, the bride's family do not rejoice at the wedding, and the bride herself is supposed to behave in a sad and subdued manner during the ceremony and must weep before leaving her father's house (*ibid.* p. 45). The same concept appears to be held by Lebanese Christians, and the behavior of the bride was undoubtedly largely conventional. The conventional aspect of this matter would explain the general lack of concern for the bride's tears. In this connection it should be mentioned that, like the European Mediterranean peoples, the Lebanese see no reason to suppress the expression of strong emotions in public. In fact, they interpret the inexpressiveness of North Europeans and their American cousins as evidence of either heartlessness or "deep cool." By the same token, women in labor are free to scream loudly even when they are not actually suffering acute pain.

4. In the Middle East generally, the chief traditional solo women's dance is some variation of what is commonly known as the "belly dance," the basic move

1 - [A newly married couple of the village -- Analyst]

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ment of which consists of rolling the pelvis. When performed by a professional dancer, it has indubitable sexual significance for the audience, although it is important to emphasize that the dancer's skill, grace, and general beauty are appraised and valued per se and that her performance never descends to the vulgar levels of the contemporary American "exotic" dancer's "bumps" and "grinds."

The women's solo dances at this wedding were not professional performances, and they cannot be described as being pelvic dances at all. The important point, however, is that these dances are performed in the village *only at weddings*. Granqvist (1935, p. 33) reports the same practice in a Palestinian Muslim village, although she does not describe the dances themselves. It is altogether possible that this cultural element is standard in the general area. If these dances are merely decorative, why are they not performed at other festive occasions besides weddings? There is no immediate answer to this question, and so the way is left open for the assumption that they have some special significance for weddings. Taking all the facts into consideration, it appears possible that dances of the type observed were originally pelvic dances which have been conventionalized almost entirely out of recognition by the demands of Christian propriety. Indeed, according to Mr. Alan Horton (who received an eye-witness report), unmistakable pelvic dances are still performed nonprofessionally at weddings in at least one Palestinian Muslim village.

Curt Sachs (1937, p. 56) writes that although pelvic dances on some occasions may have merely the purpose of sexual stimulation, they can also have a symbolic meaning connected with the interest in fertility. It is well known that fertility symbolism is regularly found in the wedding ceremonies of many cultures, and there could hardly be a more appropriate occasion than a wedding for fertility symbolization (however much sublimated), especially in a culture where large numbers of children are explicitly valued. Furthermore it is known (see, for example, Frazer, 1906) that in Semitic paganism fertility themes and sexual symbolism were very important. These were, in fact, among the "Canaanite abominations" so abhorred by the leaders of the ancient Hebrews.

We are, therefore, tempted to reach the admittedly tentative conclusion that the women's solo wedding dances are vestiges of very ancient fertility themes, reinforced by an on-going concern with the matter of fertility itself. Probably none of the dancers is conscious of the symbolization, but neither are the throwers of rice at Western weddings. Readers may certainly be excused if they are skeptical of the validity of this reasoning, and any better explanation of the various observed phenomena is very welcome.

3. The bride's putting of a lump of raw dough (*maḥlīḥ*) on the lintel of her husband's house is evidently a widespread practice. Granqvist reports on it from her Palestinian village, saying that it is supposed to be handed to the bride by her mother-in-law. She adds, "Although the women did not say so, it seemed as if they had a vague idea of some similarity between the sour dough which rises and swells as it ferments and woman who becomes pregnant and increases the

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and young adults was held in the school—tickets sold for the benefit of the club's projected volleyball court. The party lasted all night long, and before four in the morning the revelers began ringing the church bell. Mass on Easter is regularly at dawn, but this was an innovation. At the party there were only European dances, no *dabki*.

On Easter, even more villagers were in attendance at mass than there had been on Good Friday, and they included all the city residents who could possibly come.

Easter is a regularly scheduled rite of intensification. The day after Easter the priest goes to each house with holy water and blesses it, sprinkling the house with the water from an olive branch. During Holy Week he acquires a great surplus of *ġurbaan* which he distributes to other villages in al-Qurni.

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536 Presumably the development in Munsif was similar. The plays are given on
548 the stage in the government school, which is equipped with footlights (candles with reflectors) and a painted backdrop (European forest scene). Arab themes have been used extensively, but *Hamlet* has been presented several times. (One young adult said he thought it was not a good play to give because the lion's share went to only one actor. It was better, he thought, to give a play in which six or seven, at least, took an equal part.) At the time of the writer's final departure from the village, the question of what play to give was being vigorously debated at all age levels. There appeared to be two opposing schools of thought, and tempers were running high in some cases.

COMPETITIVE SPORTS

526 Competitive games such as weight-lifting and javelin throwing have always been popular among the Arabs, but team athletics are something new, introduced by the American mission schools.

In Munsif, volleyball is *the* game, and it appears to date, like the plays, from early in the twentieth century. At present, the village has three teams, ranked in order of the collective skill of their respective players. Most of the games are "intramural," within the village, but a regular series is played with the teams of other villages in the Qurni. In 1951, the first team played a team from Brmumaana,
[575] a large resort town above Beirut. The club appears to take a major role in organizing the teams and arranging games. The girls have their own team.

The following quotation, introduced here for comparative purposes, is taken from a chapter in Dodd (1940) which is credited to Afif Tannous, and probably the village mentioned in it is Bishmizziin.

> A few years ago, a group of us started the game of volleyball in our village in Northern Lebanon. The game was new, and the villagers were at first lukewarm about it. However, it did not take long before the enthusiasm for the game began to touch one individual after another and lead him to request the privilege of participating. Even old farmers, who would not hear of the idea at first, began to feel proud of having their boys belong to the village team. . . . The following summer, the girls of the village caught the spirit and organized their own teams. From our village the idea spread to several neighboring villages and in these volleyball teams were also organized. The next step that naturally followed was the interchange of volleyball matches among these different teams. Each week a match would be arranged for in a different village during which time hundreds of villagers would come from neighboring villages to attend the match. Volleyball became the game for the district, supplying the villages with an excellent opportunity for recreation. (Dodd, 1940, pp. 638–39.)

DANCING

535 Although no one put it into so many words, the impression was given that such traditional dances as the *dabki* are looked upon at best with sentimental attach-

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ment by most of the middle-aged people and with unfeigned derision by many, though not all, younger people. One middle-aged woman said that of course everyone knew how to do the *dabki*, and that "it is done sometimes, and at weddings." "But," she said, "it is better when everyone does it dressed in *thirwal* and *agal* and *kuffiyyah*." The only interpretation which the writer can give to this remark is that the *dabki* is associated with the old days which are no more. There is some evidence that the dance is done far less now in general than it used to be. An acquaintance of the writer's in Beirut, an American of Lebanese ancestry, said that for two years he had looked around unsuccessfully for a performance of it in Beirut. On at least one occasion his inquiries were met with the scornful remark: "Oh, the *dabki* is just for peasants in the mountains."

For the most part, the adolescent and young adult Munṣifiin seem to be committed to the rejection of the more obvious concomitants of their peasant background, and their de-emphasis on the *dabki* is probably an aspect of this. Rather than the *dabki*, it is the samba, rumba, and tango which please the young people most. In this respect, Munṣif is by no means an isolated case. Spanish and South American rhythms are immensely popular among the Lebanese. That well-known tune, "La Compecita," was a popular classic in Lebanon in 1943, and it remains so today. The appeal appears to be more rhythmical than melodic, and of course Spanish music has for a long time been influenced by Arab modes.

The social gatherings in the club are, in sum, featured by the playing mostly of Spanish and South American dances and songs on the phonograph. In traditional Arab culture there is no "concert" music. Music is either to be danced to or it is merely background for a poetic recitation. The second function is maintained today by the traditional forms, but the first has been expanded and taken over by Western forms. Dancing to Western music involves close physical contact between the sexes, and this is very much at variance with traditional norms. One older man, in fact, said, "All this touching is not good for the young people." In general, Western free social intercourse between the sexes has been a difficult kind of behavior for young people of the Middle East to adjust themselves to. To many of them it suggests an invitation to free sexual intercourse, an understandable misinterpretation which has led to much pain and embarrassment, for example, among students in the city.

THE HOME

Hospitality is a virtue which the Arabs value very highly, in part because it implies generosity, another trait which is explicitly valued. At whatever time a guest may arrive at a house, a cup of coffee is made specially for him; and if the occasion requires it, he is invited to dine and even to spend the night. All this is, as often as not, done without any prior notice at all.

The principle of hospitality applies among the villagers in their daily lives, although ordinarily it involves no further effort than making coffee. In the absence